

HONORÉ DE BALZAC

THE RESOURCES OF
QUINOLA: A COMEDY IN A
PROLOGUE AND FIVE
ACTS

Оноре де Бальзак

**The Resources of Quinola: A
Comedy in a Prologue and Five Acts**

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Honoré de Balzac

The Resources of Quinola: A Comedy in a Prologue and Five Acts

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Had the author of the following play written it merely for the purpose of winning for it the universal praise which the journals have lavished upon his romances, and which perhaps transcended their merits, *The Resources of Quinola* would still have been an excellent literary speculation; but, when he sees himself the object of so much praise and so much condemnation, he has come to the conclusion that it is much more difficult to make successfully a first venture on the stage than in the field of mere literature, and he has armed himself, accordingly, with courage, both for the present and for the future.

The day will come when the piece will be employed by critics as a battering ram to demolish some piece at its first representation, just as they have employed all his novels and even his play entitled *Vautrin*, to demolish *The Resources of Quinola*.

However tranquil may be his mood of resignation, the author cannot refrain from making here two suggestive observations.

Not one among fifty feuilleton writers has failed to treat as a fable, invented by the author, the historic fact upon which is founded the present play.

Long before M. Arago mentioned this incident in his history of steam, published in the *Annuaire du Bureau des Longitudes*, the author, to whom the incident was known, had guessed in imagination the great drama that must have led up to that final act of despair, the catastrophe which necessarily ended the career of the unknown inventor, who, in the middle of the sixteenth century, built a ship that moved by steam in the harbor of Barcelona, and then scuttled it with his own hands in the presence of two hundred thousand spectators.

This observation is sufficient answer to the derision which has been flung upon what was supposed to be the author's hypothesis as to the invention of steam locomotion before the time of the Marquis of Worcester, Salomon de Caus and Papin.

The second observation relates to the strange manner in which almost all the critics have mistaken the character of Lavradi, one of the personages in this comedy, which they have stigmatized as a hideous creation. Any one who reads the piece, of which no critic has given an exact analysis, will see that Lavradi, sentenced to be transported for ten years to the *presides*, comes to ask pardon of the king. Every one knows how freely the severest penalties were in the sixteenth century measured out for the lightest offences, and how warmly valets in a predicament such as Quinola's, were welcomed by the spectators in the antique theatres.

Many volumes might be filled with the laments of feuilletonists, who for nearly twenty years have called for comedies in the Italian, Spanish or English style. An attempt has been made to produce one, and the critics would rather eat their own words than miss the opportunity of choking off the man who has been bold enough to venture upon a pathway of such fertile promise, whose very antiquity lends to it in these days the charm of novelty.

Nor must we forget to mention, to the disgrace of our age, the howl of disapprobation which greeted the title "Duke of Neptunado," selected by Philip II. for the inventor, a howl in which educated readers will refuse to join, but which was so overwhelming at the presentation of the piece that after its first utterance the actors omitted the term during the remainder of the evening. This howl was raised by an audience of spectators who read in the newspapers every morning the title of the Duke

of Vittoria, given to Espartero, and who must have heard of the title Prince of Paz, given to the last favorite of the last but one of the kings of Spain. How could such ignorance as this have been anticipated? Who does not know that the majority of Spanish titles, especially in the time of Charles V. and Philip II. refer to circumstances under which they were originally granted?

An admiral took that of *Transport-Real*, from the fact that the dauphin sailed with him to Italy.

Navarro was given the title *La Vittoria* after the sea-fight of Toulon, though the issue of the conflict was indecisive.

These examples, and as many others, are outdone by that of the famous finance minister, a parvenu broker, who chose to be entitled the Marquis Insignificant (l'Ensenada).

In producing a work, constructed with all the dramatic irregularity of the early French and Spanish stage, the author has made an experiment which had been called for by the suffrages of more than one "organ of public opinion," as well as of all the "first-nighters" of Paris. He wished to meet the genuine public and to have his piece represented in a house filled with a paying audience. The unsatisfactory result of this ordeal was so plainly pointed out by the whole press, that the indispensability of *claqueurs* has been now forever established.

The author had been confronted by the following dilemma, as stated by those experienced in such matters. If he introduced into the theatre twelve hundred "dead heads," the success secured by their applause would undoubtedly be questioned. If twelve hundred paying spectators were present, the success of the piece was almost out of the question. The author chose to run the risk of the latter alternative. Such is the history of this first representation, where so many people appeared to be made so uncomfortable by their elevation to the dignity of independent judges.

The author intends therefore to return to the beaten track, base and ignoble though it be, which prejudice has laid out as the only avenue to dramatic success; but it may not be unprofitable to state here, that the first representation of *The Resources of Quinola* actually redounded to the advantage of the *claqueurs*, the only persons who enjoyed any triumph in an evening entertainment from which their presence was debarred!

Some idea of the criticism uttered on this comedy may be gained from the fact that out of the fifty newspapers, all of which for the last twenty years have uttered over the unsuccessful playwright the hackneyed phrase, "the play is the work of a clever man who will some day take his revenge," not one employed it in speaking of *The Resources of Quinola*, which they were unanimous in consigning to oblivion. This result has settled the ambition of the author.

Certain persons, whose good auguries the author had done nothing to call forth, encouraged from the outset this dramatic venture, and thus showed themselves less critical than unkind; but the author counts such miscalculations as blessings in disguise, for the loss of false friends is the best school of experience. Nor is it less a pleasure than a duty thus publicly to thank the friends, like M. Leon Gozlan, who have remained faithful, towards whom the author has contracted a debt of gratitude; like M. Victor Hugo, who protested, so to speak, against the public verdict at the first representation, by returning to witness the second; like M. de Lamartine and Madame de Girardin, who stuck to their first opinion, in spite of the general public reprobation of the piece. The approval of such persons as these would be consoling in any disaster.

LAGNY, 2 April, 1842.

PERSONS OF THE PROLOGUE

Philip II., King of Spain
Cardinal Cienfuegos, Grand Inquisitor
The Captain of the Guards
The Duke of Olmedo
The Duke of Lerma
Alfonso Fontanares
Lavradi, known as Quinola
A halberdier
An alcalde of the palace
A familiar of the Inquisition
The Queen of Spain
The Marchioness of Mondejar

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

Don Fregose, Viceroy of Catalonia
Grand Inquisitor
Count Sarpi, secretary to the Viceroy
Don Ramon, a savant
Avaloros, a banker
Mathieu Magis, a Lombard
Lothundiaz, a burgess
Alfonso Fontanares, an inventor
Lavradi, known as Quinola, servant to Fontanares
Monipodio, a retired bandit
Coppolus, a metal merchant
Carpano, a locksmith
Esteban, workman
Girone, workman
The host of the "Golden Sun"
A bailiff
An alcalde
Faustine Brancadori
Marie Lothundiaz, daughter to Lothundiaz
Dona Lopez, duenna to Marie Lothundiaz
Paquita, maid to Faustine

SCENE: Spain – Valladolid and Barcelona

TIME: 1588-89

PROLOGUE

SCENE FIRST

(The scene is laid at Valladolid, in the palace of the King of Spain. The stage represents the gallery which leads to the chapel. The entrance to the chapel is on the spectators' left, that to the royal apartment on the right. The principal entrance is in the centre. On each side of the principal door stand two halberdiers. At the rise of the curtain the Captain of the Guards and two lords are on the stage. An alcalde of the palace stands in the centre of the gallery. Several courtiers are walking up and down in the hall that leads to the gallery.)

The Captain of the Guards, Quinola (wrapped in his mantle) and a halberdier.

The halberdier (barring the way to Quinola)

No one passes this way, unless he has the right to do so. Who are you?

Quinola (lifting up the halberd)

An ambassador.

(All look at him.)

Halberdier

From what state?

Quinola (passing in)

From what state? From a state of misery.

The Captain of the Guards Go and bring the major-domo of the palace, that he may render to this ambassador the honors that are due him. (To the halberdier) Three days' imprisonment.

Quinola (to the Captain)

You are a very droll rascal.

Quinola (taking him aside)

Are not you the cousin of the Marchioness of Mondejar?

The Captain

What if I am?

Quinola Although she is high in favor, she is on the brink of an abyss, into which she may fall and lose her head in falling.

The Captain All people of your class trump up these stories! – Listen, you are the twenty-second person, and we have only reached the tenth of the month, who has made an attempt to be introduced to the favorite, for the purpose of squeezing a few pistoles from her. Take yourself off or else —

Quinola My lord, it is better to be misled by twenty-two poor devils, twenty-two times, than once to miss the opportunity of heeding him who is sent by your good angel; and you see, I may also say (he opens his mantle) I am wearing her wings.

The Captain

Let us end this, and tell me what proof of your errand you can give?

Quinola (handing him a letter) This little message you must return to me so that the secret remains in our possession, and hang me if you do not see the marchioness swoon when she reads it. Believe moreover that I profess, in common with an immense majority of Spaniards, a deep-seated aversion for – the gallows.

The Captain And suppose that some ambitious woman has paid for your life, that she give it in exchange for another's?

Quinola Should I be in rags? My life is as good as Caesar's. Look here, my lord. (He unseals the letter, smells it, folds it up again, and gives it to him) Are you satisfied?

The Captain (aside)

I have yet time. (To Quinola) Remain where you are, I am going to her.

SCENE SECOND

Quinola (alone, in the front of the stage, looking at the departing captain) That is all right! O my dear master, if the torture chamber has not broken your bones, you are likely to get out of the cells of the holy – the thrice holy Inquisition – saved by your poor cur Quinola! Poor? – why should I say poor? My master once free, we will end by cashing our hopes. To live at Valladolid for six months without money, and without being nabbed by the alguazils, argues the possession of certain small talents, which, if applied to – other ends, might bring a man to – something different in fact! If we knew where we were going no one would stir a step – I purpose speaking to the king, I, Quinola. God of the rascallions, give me the eloquence – of – a pretty woman, of the Marchioness of Mondejar —

SCENE THIRD

Quinola and the Captain.

The Captain (to Quinola) Here are fifty doubloons which the marchioness sends you, that you may be enabled to make your appearance here in decent guise.

Quinola (pouring the gold from one hand into the other) Ah, this burst of sunshine has been long expected! I will return, my lord, radiant as that amorous valet, whose name I have assumed; Quinola at your service, Quinola soon to be lord of wide domains, where I shall administer justice, from the time – (aside) I cease to fear its ministers.

SCENE FOURTH

The Courtiers and the Captain.

The Captain (alone at the front of the stage) What secret has this miserable creature discovered? My cousin almost fainted away. She told me that it concerned all my friends. The king must have something to do in the matter. (To a lord) Duke of Lerma, is there anything new in Valladolid?

The Duke of Lerma (whispering) It is said that the Duke of Olmedo was murdered this morning, at three o'clock, just before dawn. It happened a few paces from the Mondejar palace.

The Captain It is quite likely he should be assassinated for prejudicing the king's mind against my cousin; the king, like all great statesmen, esteems as true everything that appears to be probable.

The Duke It is said that enmity between the duke and the marchioness was only a pretence, and that the assassin is not to be prosecuted.

The Captain Duke, this ought not to be repeated unless it can be proved, and even then could not be written excepting with a sword dipped in my blood.

The Duke

You asked me the news.

(The duke retires.)

SCENE FIFTH

The same persons, and the Marchioness of Mondejar.

The Captain Ah! here is my cousin! (To the marchioness) Dear marchioness, you are still very much agitated. In the name of our common salvation, control yourself; you will attract attention.

The Marchioness

Has that man come back?

The Captain Now, how can a man of such base condition as he is throw you into such terror?

The Marchioness He holds my life in his hands; more than my life, indeed; for he holds in his power the life also of another, who, in spite of the most scrupulous precautions, cannot avoid exciting the jealousy —

The Captain Of the king! – Did he cause the assassination of the Duke of Olmedo, as is rumored?

The Marchioness Alas! I do not know what to think. – Here I am alone, helpless – and perhaps soon to be abandoned.

The Captain You may rely upon me – I shall constantly be in the midst of all our enemies like a hunter on the watch.

SCENE SIXTH

The same persons and Quinola.

Quinola

I have only thirty doubloons left, but I have had the worth of sixty.

– Ah! what a lovely scent! The marchioness can now talk to me without fear.

The Marchioness (pointing out Quinola)

Is this our man?

The Captain

Yes.

The Marchioness Keep watch, my cousin, so that I may be able to talk without being overheard.

(To Quinola) Who are you, my friend?

Quinola (aside)

Her friend! As soon as you have a woman's secret, you are her friend.

(Aloud) Madame, I am a man superior to all considerations and all circumstances.

The Marchioness

You have reached a pretty good height, at any rate.

Quinola

Is that a threat or a warning?

The Marchioness

Sir, you are very impertinent.

Quinola Do not mistake farsightedness for impertinence. You must study me, before coming to a decision. I am going to describe my character to you; my real name is Lavradi. At the moment Lavradi ought to be serving a ten years' sentence in Africa, at the presidio, owing to an error of the alcaldes of Barcelona. Quinola is the conscience, white as your fair hands, of Lavradi. Quinola does to know Lavradi. Does the soul know the body? You may unite the soul, Quinola, to the body, Lavradi, all the more easily because this morning Quinola was at the postern of your garden, with the friends of the dawn who stopped the Duke of Olmedo —

The Marchioness

What has happened to him?

Quinola Lavradi would take advantage of this moment, which is full of promise, to ask a pardon; but Quinola is a gentleman.

The Marchioness

You are taken up too much with yourself —

Quinola And not sufficiently with him – that is just. The duke took us for foul assassins; we were simply asking him, at a rather too advantageous hour, to make us a loan, pledged by our rapiers as collateral. The famous Majoral, who was in command of us, being close pressed by the duke, was forced to disable him by a little thrust, of which he knows the secret.

The Marchioness

O! My God! —

Quinola

Happiness is cheap at such a cost, madame.

The Marchioness (aside)

Hush! He knows my secret.

Quinola When we saw that the duke had not a maravedi about him, we left him where he was. As I was the least culpable of all the gang, I was charged to take him home; in adjusting his pockets, which had been turned inside out, I found the letter which he had written to you, and, learning your position at the court, I understood —

The Marchioness

That your fortune was made?

Quinola

Not at all – that my life was in danger.

The Marchioness

Indeed?

Quinola

To whom are you speaking? Quinola or Lavradi?

The Marchioness Lavradi shall have his pardon. What does Quinola desire? To enter my service?

Quinola Foundling children are of gentle birth; Quinola will deliver your letter to you with asking a maravedi, without obliging you to do anything unworthy of you, and he expects that you will refrain from desiring the services of a poor devil who carries under his wallet the heart of the Cid.

The Marchioness

How dear you are going to cost me, fellow!

Quinola

You said to me just now, "my friend."

The Marchioness

Were you not my enemy?

Quinola On account of that word I trust you, madame, and intend to tell you everything. But here – do not laugh – you must promise – I wish —

The Marchioness

You wish?

Quinola I wish – to speak to the king – at the moment when he passes on his way to the chapel; I desire you to lend favor to my request.

The Marchioness

But what are you going to ask him?

Quinola

The most simple thing in the world – an audience for my master.

The Marchioness

Explain yourself, for time presses.

Quinola Madame, I am the servant of a philosopher; and if the mark of genius is poverty, we have a great deal too much genius, madame.

The Marchioness

To the point.

Quinola Senor Alfonso Fontaneres has come here from Catalonia to offer the king our master the sceptre of the sea. At Barcelona he was taken for a madman; here he is considered a sorcerer. When it becomes known what he proposes, he is scoffed at in the antechambers. One wishes to protest for the sake of ruining him; another, a philosopher, throws a doubt on the existence of our secret, with the view of filching it; others again make him a business proposition – capitalists who wish to entangle him in their meshes. As things go at present we do not know how they will turn out. No one certainly can deny the forces of mechanics and geometry, but the finest theorems have very little bodily nourishment in them, and the smallest of ragouts is better for the stomach; but, really, science is not to blame for that. During the past winter my master and myself warmed ourselves over our projects, and chewed the end of our illusions... Well, madame, he is now in prison, for he has been accused of being on too friendly terms with the devil; and, unfortunately, the Holy Office is right, this time, for we have constantly seen him at the bottom of our purse. And now, madame, I implore you, inspire the king with curiosity to see a man who will give him a dominion as extended as that which Columbus gave to Spain.

The Marchioness But since Columbus gave a new world to Spain, new worlds are being offered to us once in every fortnight!

Quinola Ah! madame, every man of genius has one of his own to offer. By heavens, it is so rare that a man can make honestly a fortune both for himself and the state that the phenomenon deserves to be favored.

The Marchioness

But what is the project about?

Quinola I must once more beg you not to laugh, madame. His plan is to make ships travel without sail or oar, against the wind, by means of a pot filled with water, which is kept boiling.

The Marchioness What an idea! Where do you come from? What do you mean? Are you dreaming?

Quinola That is just what they all say! Ah, common herd, ye are so constituted that the man of genius, who is right ten years before everybody else, passes for a madman for twenty-five years. I am the only one who believes in this man, and it is on this account I love him; to understand another is to be his equal.

The Marchioness

And you want me to repeat this nonsense to the king?

Quinola Madame, you are the only person in the whole of Spain to whom the king will not say, "Be silent."

The Marchioness You do not know the king, and I do. (Aside) I must get back my letter. (Aloud) There is one recent circumstance whose occurrence seems favorable to your master; news comes to the king that the Armada has been lost; wait for him on his way through to chapel and address him. (Exit.)

SCENE SEVENTH

The Captain of the Guards, the Courtiers and Quinola.

Quinola (in the front of the stage) It is not sufficient to possess genius and to employ it, for there are plenty of people who make a false show to have it and meet excellent success. There is need also of opportunity and favoring circumstances; a picked up letter which puts a favorite in danger, in order to obtain an interceding tongue, and the loss of the mightiest of flotillas, in order to open the ears of a prince. Chance is an infamous wretch! And now, in the duel of Fontanares with his century, the hour has come for his poor second to appear. (Bells are heard; guard is mounted.) Is yon sound an omen of success? (To the Captain of the Guards) How ought the king to be spoken to?

The Captain Step forward, bow your knee, and say: "Sire" – and pray God to guide your tongue aright.

(The royal procession appears.)

Quinola I shall have no trouble falling upon my knees; they are giving way already; for it is not only the fate of a man, but of a world, that is at stake.

A page

The queen!

A page

The king!

(Tableau.)

SCENE EIGHTH

The same persons, the King, the Queen, the Marchioness of Mondejar, the Grand Inquisitor and the whole Court.

Philip II. Gentlemen, we are about to pray God and honor Him who had dealt a deadly blow to Spain. England has escaped us, the Armada is lost, and we desire no more to talk of that flotilla. Admiral (he turns to the admiral), you were not sent to give battle to the storms.

Quinola

Sire! (He falls on one knee.)

Philip II.

Who are you?

Quinola The most insignificant and the most devoted of your subjects; the servant of a man who pines in the prisons of the Holy Office, accused of magic, because he desires to give to your Majesty the power of escaping from similar disasters —

Philip II. If you are really a servant, rise to your feet. Only grandees are wont to kneel here, in presence of the king.

Quinola

My master, then, shall kneel at your feet.

Philip II. Explain yourself in brief; the moments of the king's whole life are not so numerous as are his subjects.

Quinola

You must have, then, but one hour for each of your empires. My master, Senor Alfonso Fontanares, is in the prison of the Holy Office —

Philip II. (to the Grand Inquisitor) Father (the Grand Inquisitor approaches), what can you tell us of a certain Alfonso Fontanares?

The Grand Inquisitor He is a pupil of Galileo. He professes the heretical doctrine of his master and boasts the power to do wonders while he refuses to explain the means. He is accused of being rather a Moor than a Spaniard.

Quinola (aside) That sallow face is going to spoil all! (To the King) Sire, my master knows no sorcery, excepting so far as he is madly in love, first with the glory of your Majesty, next with a maid of Barcelona, heiress of Lothundiaz, the richest burgess of the town. As he picked up more science than wealth in studying natural science in Italy, the poor youth has failed in his attempt to marry this maid. — And notice, sire, how great men are calumniated; in his despair he made a pilgrimage to the Virgen del Pilar, to beg her assistance, because Marie was the name of the lady he loved. On leaving the church, he sat down wearied under a tree and fell asleep. In his dreams the Virgin appeared to him and communicated to him an invention by which he could navigate ships without sails, without oars, against wind and tide. He approached you, sire; but between the sun and him a cloud intervened, and after a deadly conflict with the cloud, he is now suffering for his confidence in the Virgen del Pilar and in his king. No one but his servant has sufficient courage to come and throw at your feet the news that there exists a means of realizing universal dominion.

Philip II.

I will see your master when I leave the chapel.

The Grand Inquisitor

Surely, the king will not expose himself to such peril?

Philip II.

My duty is to inquire.

The Grand Inquisitor

And mine is to make men respect the privileges of the Sacred Office.

Philip II.

I know them. Obey me and keep silence. I know that I owe you a hostage. I know it. (He looks round) Tell me, where is the Duke of

Olmedo?

Quinola (aside)

Aha!

The Marchioness (aside)

We are lost.

The Captain of the Guards

Sire, the duke is not yet – arrived —

Philip II. Who has given him leave thus boldly to forsake the duties of his office? (Aside) Some one is deceiving me. (To the Captain of the Guards) Tell him, if he comes, that the king has committed him as a prisoner of the Holy Office. (To the Grand Inquisitor) Issue the order.

The Grand Inquisitor

Sire, I will go myself.

The Queen

And what if the duke fails to come?

Philip II. In that case he must be dead. (To the captain) You will take his place in the execution of my orders. (He enters the chapel.)

The Marchioness (to Quinola) Run to the duke's house, tell him to come and comport himself as if he were not wounded to the death. The report will then be considered mere calumny.

Quinola You may reckon upon me, but grant us your protection. (Alone) Great heavens! The king seemed charmed by my little fable of the Virgen del Pilar; I must make a vow to her – but what shall it be? – we will see after we have succeeded.

(Scene curtain.)

SCENE NINTH

(A cell of the Inquisition.)

Fontanares (alone) I understand now why Columbus desired that his fetters should be placed beside him in his coffin. What a lesson for discoverers! A great discovery is a revelation of truth. And truth destroys so many abuses and errors that all those who live by falsehood rise up to slay the truth; they begin by assailing the man. Let inventors then have patience! I myself desire to have it. Unfortunately, my patience proceeds from my love. In the hope of obtaining Marie, I dream of glory and I pursue it. I saw a piece of straw fly up above a boiler. All men have had the same experience since boilers and straw existed. But I saw there a force; in order to estimate its violence, I put a lid on the boiler; the lid flew off but did not kill me. Archimedes and I are of the same mind! He wished for a lever and a fulcrum to move the world; I possess this lever and have been fool enough to say so; since then – misfortunes have overwhelmed me. If I should die, you, man of genius who shall discover the secret, act on it, but keep silence. The light which we discover, men take from us, only to set on fire our funeral pile. Galileo, my master, is in prison for having said that the earth moves, and I am here for attempting to apply the forces of the earth. No! I am here because I rebel against the cupidity of those who desire to steal my secret; were it not for my love for Marie, I would claim my liberty to-night, leaving to them the profit, keeping to myself the fame – Ah! What rage is in my heart! But rage is only fit for children; let me be calm and then I shall be strong. Would that I might have news of the only man who has faith in me! He is at liberty, he, who begged to win me bread. But faith is only found among the poor, who have need of it.

SCENE TENTH

The Grand Inquisitor, a familiar and Fontanares.

The Grand Inquisitor

Well, my son, how are you? You were speaking of faith, doubtless you have made some sage reflections recently. Come now, spare the Holy

Office a resort to severity.

Fontanares

Father, what do you wish me to say?

The Grand Inquisitor Before setting you at liberty, the Holy Office must be sure that the means you employ are natural —

Fontanares Father, if I had made a compact with the Evil One, would he have let me languish here?

The Grand Inquisitor Your words are impious; the devil has a master whose existence is proved by our burning of heretics.

Fontanares

Have you ever seen a ship on the sea? (The Grand Inquisitor assents.)

By what means is it propelled?

The Grand Inquisitor

The wind fills the sails.

Fontanares

Did the devil reveal this method of navigation to the first sailor?

The Grand Inquisitor

Do you know who he was?

Fontanares He was, perhaps, the founder of some long forgotten power that ruled the sea – at any rate, the means that I employ are not less natural than his. I have seen a certain force in nature, a force controllable by man. For the wind is God's creature, and man is not its master, but the wind propels the ships of man, while my force is in the ship itself.

The Grand Inquisitor (aside) This man may prove a dangerous fellow. (Aloud) And you refuse to tell us what it is?

Fontanares I will tell the king, in presence of the court; for, after that, no one will be able to rob me of my glory and the fortune that it brings.

The Grand Inquisitor You call yourself an inventor, and yet you think of nothing but fortune! You are too ambitious to be a man of genius.

Fontanares Father, I am so profoundly disgusted by the jealousy of the vulgar, by the avarice of the great, by the behavior of sham philosophers, that – but for my love for Marie – I would give back that which chance has bestowed upon me.

The Grand Inquisitor

Chance?

Fontanares I am wrong. I would give back to God the thought which God has sent to me.

The Grand Inquisitor God did not send it to you that it might be hidden, and we have the right to force you to divulge it. (To his familiar) Bid them prepare the rack.

Fontanares

I was expecting it.

SCENE ELEVENTH

The Grand Inquisitor, Fontanares, Quinola and the Duke of Olmedo.

Quinola

It isn't a very healthy thing, this torture.

Fontanares

Quinola! And in what a livery!

Quinola

The livery of success, for you are to be freed.

Fontanares

Free? And to pass from hell to heaven in an instant?

The Duke of Olmedo

As martyrs do.

The Grand Inquisitor

Sir, do you dare to say such words in this place!

The Duke of Olmedo I am charged by the king to take out of your custody this man, and will answer for him to the Holy Inquisition.

The Grand Inquisitor

What a mistake!

Quinola

Ah! you would like to boil him in your cauldrons of oil! Many thanks!

His cauldrons are going to carry us 'round the world – like this. (He twirls his hat.)

Fontanares

Embrace me, my friend, and tell me how —

The Duke of Olmedo

Say not a word here —

Quinola

Yes (he points to the Inquisitor), for here the walls have ears. Come.

And you (speaking to the duke) take courage. You are pale, and I must give to you a tinge of color; but I know how to do it.

(Scene curtain.)

SCENE TWELFTH

(Palace gallery as in first scene.)

The Duke of Olmedo, the Duke of Lerma, Fontanares and Quinola.

The Duke of Olmedo

We have come just in time!

The Duke of Lerma

You were not wounded then?

The Duke of Olmedo Who said I was? Would the favorite of the king ruin me? And should I be here, as you see me, if I were dead? (To Quinola) Stand close and hold me up.

Quinola (to Fontanares)

This is a man worthy of your love.

Fontanares Who would not envy such a one? Yet how seldom is occasion given to show one's love.

Quinola Spare us, good sir, all this rigmarole about love, in the presence of the king; for the king, hark you —

A page

The King!

Fontanares

Come on, and let all our thoughts be for Marie!

Quinola (noticing that the Duke of Olmedo is fainting)

How are you? (He puts a flask to his nostrils.)

SCENE THIRTEENTH

The same persons, the King, the Queen, the Captain of the Guards, the Grand Inquisitor, the Marchioness of Mondejar, the President of the Council of Castile and the whole court.

Philip II. (to the Captain of the Guards)

Has our man arrived?

The Captain The Duke of Olmedo, whom I met on the palace steps, has at once obeyed the commands of the king.

The Duke of Olmedo (falling on one knee)

Will the king deign to pardon a delay – unpardonable?

Philip II. (raising him by his wounded arm) I was told you were dying – (he glances at the marchioness) – of a wound received in a nocturnal attack.

The Duke of Olmedo

Well, you see me here, sire, a sufficient answer.

The Marchioness (aside)

He is rouged!

Philip II. (to the duke)

Where is your prisoner?

The Duke of Olmedo (pointing to Fontanares)

Yonder he stands.

Fontanares (kneeling) And ready, to the great glory of God, to do wonders which shall add splendor to the reign of the king, my master.

Philip II. Rise up and speak to me; what is this force miraculous which shall give to Spain the empire of the world?

Fontanares It is a force invincible, sire. It is steam; for, when water has become expanded in steam, it demands a much more extensive area than that which it occupies in its natural form; and in order to take that space it would blow up mountains. By my invention this force is confined; the machine is provided with wheels, which beat the sea and propel a vessel as swiftly as the wind, so that tempests cannot resist its course. Voyages can be made in safety and so swiftly that there is no limit to speed excepting in the revolution of the wheels. Human life is lengthened every time a moment is economized. Sire, Christopher Columbus gave to you a world three thousand leagues across the ocean; I will bring one to you at the port of Cadiz, and you shall claim, with the assistance of God, the dominion of the sea.

The Queen

You do not seem to be astonished, sire?

Philip II.

Astonishment is involuntary flattery, and kings may never flatter. (To

Fontanares) What do you ask of me?

Fontanares That which Columbus asked, a ship and the presence of my king to witness the experiment.

Philip II. You shall have all – the king, the realm of Spain – the whole world. They tell me that you love a maid of Barcelona. I am about to cross the Pyrenees, to visit my possessions, Roussillon and Perpignan; you shall receive your vessel at Barcelona.

Fontanares In granting me this vessel, sire, you have done me justice; in giving it to me at Barcelona, you have bestowed a favor which, from a subject, makes me your slave.

Philip II. Yet be cautious; to lose a vessel of the state will be to risk your life, for so the law provides.

Fontanares

I know it, and accept the risk.

Philip II. Well said, brave man! If you succeed in constructing this sailless, oarless vessel that shall face the wind as swiftly as if the wind were in its favor, I will create you – what is your name?

Fontanares

Alfonso Fontanares.

Philip II.

You shall be Don Alfonso Fontanares, Duke of – Neptunado, Grandee of Spain.

The Duke of Lerma

Sire, the statutes concerning nobility —

Philip II.

Silence! Duke of Lerma. It is the duty of the king to exalt the man of genius above all other men and thus to honor the ray of light which

God has given to him.

The Grand Inquisitor

Sire —

Philip II.

What would you?

The Grand Inquisitor We did not imprison the man on the charge that he had commerce with the devil, nor because of his impiety, nor because he springs from a family suspected of heresy; but for the safety of monarchies. Printing has permitted clever men to communicate their thoughts to others and the result has been – Luther, whose word has flown abroad in every direction. But this man is endeavoring to make out of all the nations of the earth a single people, and, before a multitude like this, the Holy Office trembles for the fate of monarchy.

Philip II.

All progress moves heavenward.

The Grand Inquisitor Heaven does not command many things which yet it does not hinder men from doing.

Philip II. Our duty consists in bringing good out of evil things and in this work of amelioration gathering all within one circle, whose centre is the throne. Do you not see what is here at stake, even the realization of that universal dominion long-sought for by my glorious father? (To Fontanares) When you have won the rank of duke and Spanish grandee of the first class, I will put upon your breast the Golden Fleece; you shall then be appointed Grand Master of Naval Construction in Spain and the Indies. (To a minister) President, you will issue, this very day, under pain of my displeasure, the order to put at the disposal of this man, in our port of Barcelona, such a vessel as he desires, and – see that no obstacle interferes with his enterprise.

Quinola

Sire —

Philip II.

What do you desire?

Quinola

While you are here, grant, sire, full pardon to a wretch named

Lavradi, who was sentenced by a deaf magistrate.

Philip II.

Because the judge was deaf, must the king be blind?

Quinola

No, but indulgent, sire, which is almost the same thing.

Fontanares Pardon! Grant pardon to the only man who has sustained me in my struggle!

Philip II. (to a minister) This man has talked with me, and I gave him my hand to kiss; issue to him letters of my full pardon.

The Queen (to the king) If this man (she points to Fontanares) is one of those great discoverers, raised up by God, Don Philip you have done a good day's work this morning.

Philip II. (to the queen) It is very difficult to distinguish between a man of genius and a madman; but if he is a madman, my promises are only worth the value of his.

Quinola (to the marchioness) Here is your letter, but let me beg you, between ourselves, to write no more.

The Marchioness

We are saved!

(The court follows the king into the royal apartment.)

SCENE FOURTEENTH

Fontanares and Quinola.

Fontanares

Surely I am dreaming – Duke! Grandee of Spain! The Golden Fleece!

Quinola And Master of Naval Construction! We shall have plenty of contractors to patronize. The court is an odd place, I should like to succeed there; how is it to be done? By impudence? I have enough of that to sell! By trickery? Why, the king believes my tale of the Virgen del Pilar. (He laughs) But what is my master thinking about?

Fontanares

Let us start at once.

Quinola

For what place?

Fontanares

For Barcelona.

Quinola No – for a tavern. If the air of the court gives the citizens a good appetite, it makes me devilish thirsty. After a drink, my glorious master, you will see your Quinola a very busy man; for we must not delude ourselves. Between the word of the king and the attainment of success, we shall meet with as many jealous philosophers, scheming tricksters, malicious cavillers, crooked, rapacious, greedy beasts of prey, thievish parasites as have ever beset you in your attempts to see the king.

Fontanares

Yet to obtain my Marie I must succeed.

Quinola

Yes, and for our own sakes also.

Curtain to the Prologue

ACT I

SCENE FIRST

(The scene is Barcelona. The stage represents a public place. On the left of the spectator appear houses, among which that of Lothundiaz stands at the corner of the street. To the right is the palace of Senora Brancadori. The time is night, but the day begins to dawn.)

Monipodio (wrapped in a mantle, seated under the balcony of the Brancadori palace), Quinola (who glides forth cautiously like a thief, and brushes against Monipodio).

Monipodio

Who is it dares to tread on my shoes?

Quinola (in ragged array)

A gentleman, who does not wear any.

Monipodio

That sounds like Lavradi.

Quinola

Monipodio! – I thought that you had been – hanged!

Monipodio

I thought that you had been beaten to death in Africa.

Quinola

Alas, we have been beaten enough without going to Africa!

Monipodio

And do you dare to show yourself here?

Quinola You seem comfortable enough here. As for me, I have the king's pardon in my pocket, and while I am waiting for my patent of nobility I call myself Quinola.

Monipodio

I suppose you stole your pardon?

Quinola

Yes, from the king.

Monipodio

And have you seen the king? (He sniffs at him.) You smell of poverty —

Quinola

Like a poet's garret. And what are you doing?

Monipodio

Nothing.

Quinola That is soon done; if it gives you any income, I would like to embrace your profession.

Monipodio

I have been misunderstood, my friend! Hunted by our political enemies.

Quinola

The judges, magistrates and police.

Monipodio

It is necessary for a man to have a political party.

Quinola

I understand you; from being the game you have become the hunter.

Monipodio What nonsense! I am always myself. I have merely come to an understanding with the viceroy. When one of my fellows has reached the end of his tether, I say to him: "Get off," and if he doesn't go, ah! I hale him to justice – you understand! – That is not treachery is it?

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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